

**MONTAGUE PUBLIC LIBRARIES TRUSTEES  
MEETING AGENDA**

**Monday, May 22nd, 2023 at 6:00PM**

**Turners Falls Senior Center  
62 5th St, Turners Falls, MA, 01376**

1. Call to order
2. Public Comment Period: Please limit comments to two minutes

**REGULAR BUSINESS** *(Please read all handouts prior to meeting. Meeting time will be for edits and questions only.)*

3. Approval of minutes from 4/24/23
4. Director's update—See attached report
5. Children's Department update: See programming report, at bottom of director's report
6. Update from: Special Services
7. Update from: Building Committee
8. Update from: Personnel Committee
9. Update from: Budget Committee
10. Corresponding Secretary's report
11. Update from: Friends of the Library

**DISCUSSION TOPICS**

12. Welcome to new trustees!
13. Reading of the bylaws
14. Election of officers
15. Items not anticipated within 48 hours of meeting. Votes may be taken
16. Next meeting date, agenda suggestions
17. Adjourn

## Director's Report, May 2023

1. Having submitted our letter of intent to apply for Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioner's state construction funding last month, the Trustees' Building Committee and I will attend a workshop on the construction application this week. In the coming weeks, with help from Steve Ellis and Walter Ramsey, the committee and I will finalize an RFP for hiring a consultant to assist with the application process and finalize a list of potential residents to invite to participate on the Construction Application Advisory Committee. We have also agreed that we need a better name for said committee, but have not yet come up with one. Suggestions welcome!

I reached out to local MBLC Library Commissioner, Karen Traub, who lives in Leverett and will meet with her to discuss the project at the end of the month.

2. On the behalf of the Friends of the Libraries, I submitted a membership application to the Food Bank of Western Mass on Wednesday, May 10. Though I was informed that our application looks great, it turns out that we're missing one necessary state form regarding the Friends' 501C# status. Vicki Valley has worked very hard to track that document down and I'll send it over the Food Bank ASAP.

Additional SNAP benefits, made available during the pandemic, have lapsed. Though the Millers Branch Food Pantry receives regular donations of canned goods from Montague Catholic Social Ministries (MCSM), residents have been cleaning out our shelves, indicating that the need has increased.

This week, we'll be putting out the call for additional food donations, which can be dropped off at any library location.

3. A representative from Atlas Farms reached out to me about coordinating visits from their mobile food market to the Millers Branch. Starting June 8<sup>th</sup>, the market will visit the library each Thursday from 2:00-3:30, which corresponds with the timing of the MCSM grocery program pick-up. The Mobile Market is attempting to reach more food deserts and communities where many residents qualify for SNAP and HIP benefits. More information here: <https://www.atlasfarm.com/market>

4. At the beginning of the month, I presented at the Connecticut Library Association annual conference as part of a panel of Network of the National Library of Medicine grant recipients. Considering health literacy and access to reliable health information, a subject that has also come up a lot during the Mass In Motion committee that I've been working with, got me thinking about how the library's website could better be used to connect patrons with local resources. I reached out to Margot, who works for NNLM, to inquire about whether that organization has ever funded web design projects and learned that they have! The next grant

round will be launched in September. I hope to apply to revamp our website and to create robust resource pages to easily connect patrons with important information.

5. Eversource cut down the large tree limb from the dying tree next to the Carnegie, but did not take down the smaller dead limbs. Vicki Valley registered her complaint about this with Steve Ellis, who passed the information to Will Stratford and Tom Bergeron at the DPW. The tent will be set up shortly, we can only hope that these smaller limbs were deemed to be non-threatening by the tree workers who cut the main limb down. The library will not host programs under the tent during days that are overly windy.
6. After last month's vote to allocate state aid funding for professional development, I'm in the process of identifying potential training opportunities that could be facilitated on-site either during staff meetings or on a separate special training day. (Non-mandatory) CPR training is first on the docket, but I'd also like to incorporate (mandatory) diversity equity and inclusion training as well as (non-mandatory) mental health first aid training. I have leads for the CPR, but if the trustees know of any good DEI or mental health first aid trainers, I'd be happy for suggestions.
7. I've put together a 3-part out concert series at the Montague Center Library on three Wednesday between May and June. On May 24<sup>th</sup> Pamela Means' Jazz Project will kick off the series. Rosie Porter and the Neon Moons will play on June 7<sup>th</sup> and Little House Blues will play on June 14<sup>th</sup>. All concerts will run 6:00 to 7:00 PM. The road in front of the library will be closed during the concert. This will allow the musicians to use the electricity from the library and play from the sidewalk/stairs. Chairs will be set up in the road and concert-goers can bring their own chairs/blankets to set up on the Common if they wish.
8. A gardening series is also in the works. Working with representatives of the Western Mass Master Gardeners, we'll set up a 6-7part workshop series to be held between June and the end of September. Workshops will be held at the Montague Center Library, at the Saturday Farmers Market in Peskeomskut Park, at the Discovery Center, and at the Unity Park Community Garden.
9. The Smithsonian programming team has decided to apply for a second-year grant, worth an additional \$10k. We'll determine the scope and content of our plans over the summer and apply for funding at the end of August.
10. The libraries' FY24 operating budget passed without any questions (woo hoo!). If all goes as planned, The Carnegie Library will expand its hours to: Monday thru Wednesday 10-7 and Thursday thru Saturday starting on July 1<sup>st</sup>. Though I had initially intended to hire for one part-time 13 hour per week position, Carnegie staff vocally noted their reluctance to participate in a rotation to cover Saturday hours at our last staff meeting. As such, I put out an internal call for two positions: the 13 hours and the Saturday hours.

Substitute library assistant, Easton Smith, has applied for the former. I'm super excited to hire him for regular hours as he has proved to be a real asset to our staff. Easton has a background in community organizing, is fluent in Spanish, and, most importantly, has consistently demonstrated friendly customer service skills with our patrons and an open and thoughtful approach to teamwork.

The Saturday position will get posted locally and to the MBLC page in the coming days.

11. Angela put together a stellar double-sided calendar of events for summer, which will get printed in color and go out as an insert in the Montague Reporter in the next week or two. The calendar highlights special events, like a visit from the Whale Mobile (!!!), CarnegieCon (Angela's take on a Comicon), the concert series at Montague Center, as well as new regular events, like our Saturday storytime, regular outreach at the Saturday Farmer's Market, game days, and LEGOs on the lawn.

Attendance numbers for children's programs have not rebounded since the pandemic. This could be due to myriad factors, so Angela, Makayla, and I have had really good conversations about how to diversify our programming offerings and how to reach more audiences, including teens and tweens. This summer, Angela will do a ton of outreach to the Brick House teen center and applied for a book donation grant from ALA to help facilitate a teen book club. We'll also be collaborating more closely with RiverCulture and the Discovery Center, which allows the libraries to share programming costs and get the word out about our programs through multiple newsletters and channels.

April programming statistics are on the next page!

	April Stats			
<b>Dates</b>	<b>Program Title</b>	<b>Program Location</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>	<b>Intended Audience</b>
<b>WEEK 1</b>				
1-Apr	Book Sale	Live In-Person On-Site (TF)		General Audience
5-Apr	Story-Time	Live In-Person On-Site (MC)	10	ages 0-5
6-Apr	Playgroup	Live In-Person On-Site (MC)	13	ages 4-6
<b>WEEK 2</b>				
10-Apr	Friends Meeting	Live Virtual Zoom (TF)		Adult
12-Apr	Story Time	Live In-Person On-Site (MC)	13	ages 0-5
13-Apr	Playgroup	Live In-Person On-Site (MC)	8	ages 0-5
11-Apr	Lemonade Social	Live In-Person On-Site (MF)	6	General Audience
15-Apr	Greenfield's Market Outreach	Live In-Person Off-Site	6	ages 6-11
<b>WEEK 3</b>				
18-Apr	LEGOS at the Library	Live In-Person On-Site (MC)	9	ages 6-11
19-Apr	Story Time	Live In-Person On-Site (MC)	8	ages 0-5
19-Apr	Author Series (Rebecca Daniels)	Live In-Person On-Site (MC)	14	General Audience
20-Apr	Playgroup	Live In-Person On-Site (MC)	10	ages 0-5
20-Apr	Game Day	Live In-Person On-Site (TF)	2	General Audience
21-Apr	Stuffed Animal Sleepover	Live In-Person On-Site (TF)	7	ages 0-5
22-Apr	Outdoor Skills	Live In-Person On-Site (MC)	9	ages 6-11 and YA
25-Apr	TFHS Outreach	Live In-Person Off-Site	2	YA
<b>WEEK 4</b>				
25-Apr	Candidate Meet & Greet	Live In-Person On-Site (TF)	20	Adult
26-Apr	Story Time	Live In-Person On-Site (MC)	10	ages 0-5
27-Apr	Playgroup	Live In-Person On-Site (MC)	11	ages 0-5
27-Apr	Brick House Outreach	Live In-Person Off-Site	5	YA
27-Apr	Thru-Hiking the AT w/ Gretchen	Live In-Person On-Site (MC)	22	Adult
28-Apr	Arbor Day Scavenger Hunt	Live In-Person On-Site (TF)	4	General Audience

28-Apr	Youth Advisory Comm. Meeting	Live In-Person On-Site (TF)	4	YA
29-Apr	Children's Author Visit	Live In-Person On-Site (MC)	18	ages 6-11
	Grab & Go Craft	Live In-Person (All 3)	63	ages 6-11
	Grab & Go Science	Live In-Person (All 3)	61	ages 6-11
			<b>TOTAL:</b>	
			335	

## MLA Conference Report 2023 - Angela Rovatti-Leonard

### Everyone at the Table: Engaging All Library Staff

Kate Flewelling cited Gallup surveys as a trusted source, the gold standard for measuring employee engagement. Recent data showed that the first decline in a decade was in 2021.

Book recommendation: *The Six Step Guide* by Elaina Norlin. "Engaged workers lead to engaged libraries - vibrant institutions that nurture their workers' dedication, creativity, and innovation so they can serve their communities most effectively." Kate's suggestions included:

- Instead of a manager as an individual star, working toward developing a team of stars in their employees.
- Avoid asking for feedback performatively.
- Frequent one-on-one check-ins.

**Takeaway:** The best practices described in this presentation will help me to be a better supervisor to the Children's Programs Assistant.

### Uncharted Waters: Designing Programming for New Demographics

**American Girl Doll Tea Party:** The idea for this event was to connect young adults and adults with something they enjoyed as children - tapping into nostalgia for the target audience of ages 18-40. Youth Services staff from the Boston Public Library combined program types by including lectures with a craft and food. The program preparation took four months but they recommend giving yourself more time. Collecting tea cups was time consuming but fit much better with the theme than paper products would have. They borrowed tea cups from patrons, neighbors and found many at a local thrift shop. They promoted on Facebook/Reddit/Instagram/Discord and local calendars, etc. #steepedinhistory. There was such an interest after the initial promotion that they had to adjust their plans for food to keep within the budget. Tea and cookies were served rather than a full tea service. The bulk of the budget went toward the presenters. They presented on historical-related topics such as the library's American Girl magazine collection.

**Takeaway:** The combination of program types is appealing and something I would like to try in general, rather than trying to recreate this specific event.

### Community Fair: The Weymouth Public Library

After analyzing survey and focus group data results, the Trustees, Director and Assistant Director found that new people who had recently moved to the area weren't sure how to become embedded and involved in the community. They decided to prioritize bringing residents together as part of their new mission. The community fair included informational/resource tables with folks from each of the town departments. Local groups, such as the garden club, the Friends of the Library etc. also had tables. People met face-to-face with the Town Administrator, the Health Director, the DPW and so on. The event also provided a way to build residents' awareness of and trust in/use of their public library.

**Takeaway:** This event served as a wonderful way to address the needs of new and existing patrons as demographics shift. Does Montague have any events similar to this, particularly to welcome new residents?

## **Bridging the Gap: Youth Outreach Through School Library Deposit Collections**

The Youth Services Librarian from the Morrill Memorial Library in Norwood and the Teen Librarian for the Boston Public Library shared the ways in which they bring library services to people where they are in the community. For example, some teens don't have the time to come to the library after school or they don't have transportation and can't get to BPL.

**Morrill Memorial Library:** Dina, in a bookmobile-esque format, set up a shelf at the middle/highschool with books from the public library's collection. She had a system set up using Google Docs to keep track of items. Books were changed out every two months.

**Boston Public Library:** Maty focused on outreach to organizations that support teens. For example, they brought hundreds of paperback books to a local youth detention center. The books were funded by a grant and not connected to the library consortium in any way.

**Takeaway:** Maybe we can offer something like this on a smaller scale, at The Brick House? We don't have a space specifically designed for teens right now. The Brick House doesn't have a collection of books. I could find a grant to pay for books that could live/circulate at the Brick House to get books in the hands of teens who may not visit the library. We could still keep track of circulations in some way without having to worry about loss of materials as much.

## **Launching a Library Comic Con**

Since we already have plans to offer Comic Con this summer for tweens & teens, I was eager to hear any guidance from librarians who have experience with planning and hosting this kind of event. The Head of Youth Services at Lucius Beebe Memorial Library and the Generalist Librarian from Somerville Public Library described their annual events. Each library had very different budgets to work with so it was great to see what the options were for both. They shared resources, such as contact info for folks who come to events for free, dressed up as favorite superheroes or characters.

**Takeaway:** I now have a much better idea of what our very first CarnegieCon could look like. We'll offer:

- free comics leftover from Free Comic Book Day
- food
- make-your-own-costume station (fabrics donated from Swanson Fabrics, recycled materials, duct tape, and more!)
- button/pin maker station (the button maker from our Library of Things is a HUGE hit with teens at outreach!)
- photo booth with props
- Bonus: Colleen and Scott already showed enthusiastic interest in dressing up that day and helping out if they can.